

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 6-10 remain pending in the application, with Claim 1 being independent. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-10 have been amended herein.

The drawings were objected to as allegedly not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In addition, Claims 1-4 and 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action suggests that the guide member is not shown in the drawings and is not clearly described in the specification. Applicant respectfully disagrees. A guide is clearly described at page 8, line 9 of the original specification. Moreover, one of ordinary skill in the art when viewing the space available for inserting a cartridge, in Figure 4, for example, would conclude that a guide is shown in the drawings. The specific physical make-up of the guide would be within the skill of an ordinarily skilled artisan and need not be shown in the drawings. Reconsideration of the drawing objection and § 112 rejection are requested.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 3-84837 (JP '837). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over JP '837 in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-181815 (Kumon et al.). Claim 9 was rejected under

§ 103 as being unpatentable over JP '837 in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent

Application No. 3-271754 (Morita et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As is recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention relates to an image forming apparatus including an image forming unit, an intermediate transfer member, recording material conveying means, transfer means, a guide member, a first openable portion and a second openable portion. The image forming unit has an image bearing member and is capable of being detachably attached to a main body of the image forming apparatus. The intermediate transfer member is disposed at an upper position relative to the image forming unit, and the image on the image bearing member is transferred thereto. The recording material conveying means conveys a recording material along a conveyance route. The transfer means transfers the image on the intermediate transfer member onto the recording material conveyed by the recording material conveying means. The guide member guides attaching and detaching of the image forming unit to and from the main body of the image forming apparatus. The first openable portion is disposed on a side surface of the main body and is openable to expose the conveyance route. The second openable portion is disposed on an upper face of the main body and is openable with respect to the main body. The first openable portion holds the transfer means, and the image forming unit can be detachably attached with the guide member through an opening formed by movement of the second openable portion in a state that the first openable portion is closed.

With the above arrangement, when the image forming unit is to be detached or attached through an upper opening formed by moving the second openable portion, the

changing operation can be easily performed because the first openable portion can remain closed and not interfere with the operator's position.

JP '837 depicts various embodiments of image forming apparatuses. The image forming apparatus depicted in Figures 3 and 4 appears to have both a top opening portion 130 and a side opening portion 140A. The Examiner refers to Figure 6 of JP '837, but Applicant respectfully submits that this embodiment does not depict a first openable portion disposed on a side surface of the main body and openable to expose a conveyance route and holding transfer means, as is recited in independent Claim 1. Thus, JP '837 also does not disclose or suggest that the image forming unit can be detachable attached with a guide member through an opening formed by movement of a second openable portion in a state that the first openable portion is closed, as is recited in independent Claim 1.

Thus, JP '837 fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited as in independent Claim 1.

Kumon et al. and Morita et al. have also been reviewed, but are not believed to remedy the deficiencies of JP '837 noted above with respect to independent Claim 1.

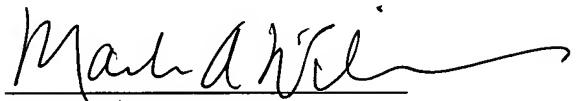
Thus, independent Claim 1 is patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claim 1. Dependent Claims 2-4 and 6-10 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 1. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Williamson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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